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## BOOK NOTICES

**Extra-biblical Sources for Hebrew and Jewish History.** Translated and edited by S. A. B. Mercer. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1913. Pp. xvi+210. \$1.50.

This book possesses one advantage over all other collections of a similar sort, in that it presents the more important inscriptions and documents from every field that bear upon the Bible. It thus includes Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Moabite, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin sources. The idea of bringing them all together into one small volume and furnishing them with brief introductory notes explaining their general bearing is a good one and worthy of encouragement.

The author tells us that he has made practically all these translations anew for himself. But we do not expect to find any significant improvement of rendering or enrichment of knowledge in the book when we read in the preface that this great task of canvassing all the important Babylonian, Assyrian, and Egyptian inscriptions, to say nothing of the rest, and rendering them into English afresh, was taken up only two years ago. A scientific translation of all these materials would be the work of a lifetime. As a matter of fact, many words and passages in the inscriptions presented are of very doubtful meaning; but Dr. Mercer satisfies himself with repeating the renderings of his predecessors. He goes beyond them in such cases only by failing to reproduce their warnings in the way of question marks and footnotes, which call attention to the uncertainty of their renderings. The unsophisticated reader for whom this book is intended would never suspect the real state of the case.

The date of Hammurabi is to be placed at 2123-2081 B.C., rather than at 2130 or 1958 B.C. (p. 7) or 2000 B.C. (p. 193). The legend on the Black Obelisk describes Jehu as "Son of Omri" not "of the land of Omri." This legend is above the relief, as stated on p. xviii, and not beneath it, as stated on p. 33. The Dog River runs into the sea about six or seven miles to the northeast of Beirut and not "through Beirut" (p. 23). "Hamah" (p. 41) is a misprint for "Hamath." On p. 44, "Khumria" should be changed to "Omri" as is done everywhere else where the name occurs. The identification of "Eri-aku king of Larsa" with Arioch king of Ellasar (Gen., chap. 14) is not sustained "by the most competent scholars" (p. 5), but rather seriously doubted by them. The reading "Bir'idri" and its identification with Benhadad I is adhered to apparently without any suspicion that it has been shown to be practically impossible. The rendering "Bir'idri

forsook his land" (p. 32) is inconsistent with the biblical statement, which is accepted on p. 25, that Hazael murdered his predecessor. It has long been recognized that this phrase, of common occurrence, denotes not flight, but death.

A second siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib is posited on p. 47, but there is no really satisfactory evidence of such a siege. The three names "Melucha," "Melukha," and "Melukh-kha" on pp. 45, 48, and 55 are one and the same and should be spelled alike to save confusion in the reader's mind. On p. 61, quotation marks should accompany the first sentence.

Notwithstanding many such shortcomings as these, Dr. Mercer's book, because of the wide range of its materials and their being here so ready of access, and because of the large number of chronological and dynastic tables which it includes, will be found a very convenient work for ready reference on the part of the student of history. It is so useful a book that we can but wish it were a better one.

**The Song of Songs, Edited as a Dramatic Poem, with Introduction, Revised Translation and Excursuses.** By W. W. Cannon. Cambridge: University Press, 1913. Pp. viii+158. 7s. 6d.

Much discussion has gone on in recent years regarding the nature of the Song of Songs. Is it a carefully wrought-out drama; or a series of songs sung at Hebrew weddings; or a mere collection of loosely related love-songs? Mr. Cannon defends stoutly the dramatic interpretation, treating the book, however, not as a genuine drama intended for representation upon the stage, but rather as a dramatic poem intended more for scenic use. This is the most competent treatment of this view available in English. The presentation is accompanied by a keen criticism of rival views which is well worth consideration. The translation follows the Authorized Version as nearly as loyalty to the Hebrew permits. The author's textual criticism is cautious, perhaps overmuch. The text is printed with accompanying analyses and headings which enable the reader to see at a glance just what Mr. Cannon conceives the original structure and significance to have been. Footnotes accompanying the translation support it with textual and critical data. The excursuses at the end are devoted to: (1) the LXX text of the Song; (2) conjectural emendation of the Massoretic text; (3) the language of the Song; and (4) quotations from the Song in other books. Far the greater part of the volume is given up to the introduction which treats